

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-10 PM-05 PA-01

SP-02 ACDA-12 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 /073 W

-----124097 011521Z /75 L

P 010900Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 864

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

CINCPAC

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 0379

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SE

SUBJECT: ALLEGED COUP ATTEMPT: SITUATION UPDATE

REF: A) VICTORIA 352 (DTG 25055Z APR 78) NOTAL; B) VICTORIA 376

(DTG 291802Z APR 78) NOTAL

1. EMBASSY HAS LITTLE ADDITIONAL HARD INFORMATION ON GOS CLAIM TO HAVE FOILED COUNTER-COUP ATTEMPT BY FOLLOWERS OF DEPOSED PRESIDENT MANCHAM (REFTEL B). POLICE HAVE NOT RELEASED EITHER THE NAMES OR NUMBER OF DETAINEES PICKED UP APRIL 29-30. REPORTS INDICATE DETAINEES HAVE BEEN MOVED FROM CENTRAL POLICE STATION TO NEARBY UNIONVALE PRISON AND RUMOR WHICH CIRCULATED APRIL 30 THAT SOME OF THOSE DETAINED BY POLICE WOULD BE QUICKLY RELEASED APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNFOUNDED. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED NAMES OF ELEVEN DETAINEES BUT THIS CANNOT YET BE CONFIRMED.

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SEYCHELLOIS WIFE OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE OF U.S.A.F. SATELLITE TRACKING STATION SAID TO BE AMONG 3-4 WOMEN DETAINED. LOCAL SCENE TODAY, A PUBLIC HOLIDAY, IS SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE BUT REMAINS CALM.

2. MIDDLE-LEVEL POLICE OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT, CONTRARY TO GOS CLAIM IN COMMUNIQUE THAT ARMS HAD BEEN SEIZED, NO WEAPONS

WERE IN FACT FOUND.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER PUGH, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TOURISM GUY SIMON WERE SHARPLY CRITICAL OF KENYAN GOVERNMENT AND CLAIMED EX-MINISTER OF AVIATION AND TOURISM DAVID JOUBERT, WHO IS CONSIDERED BY GOS TO BE A LEADING CONSPIRATOR, HAS RECEIVED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GABON AND ZAIRE. HE ADDED THAT FORMER NON-RESIDENT ZAIROIS AMBASSADOR KAMAKANGA HAD RECENT TWO HOUR MEETING WITH JOUBERT IN NAIROBI.

4. BBC WORLD NEWS BROADCAST AT 2200 APRIL 30 QUOTED EX-PRESIDENT MANCHAM AS DENYING HAVING HAD ANY ROLE IN ALLEGED ANTI-GOVERNMENT PLOT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE GOS WAS IN FACT EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUNTER-COUP ATTEMPT PRIOR TO JUNE 5 COMMEMORATION OF COUP D'ETAT WHICH BROUGHT PRESIDENT RENE TO POWER (REFTEL A), MANNER AND TIMING OF ARRESTS CLEARLY INDICATES MOVE BY SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT AGAINST LOCAL DISSIDENTS WAS DECIDED SOME TIME AGO, PERHAPS BEFORE RENE DEPARTED APRIL 27 ON HIS VISITS TO PRC AND NORTH KOREA. FOR ONE THING, CAREFULLY-WORDED, MIMEOGRAPHED COMMUNIQUE (IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH) WAS AVAILABLE AT CONFERENCE OF PRO-GRESSION PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE SOUTH-WEST INDIAN OCEAN ONLY TWO HOURS AFTER ARREST OPERATION GOT UNDERWAY. IN ADDITION, OPENING OF FINAL SESSION OF CONFERENCE WAS DELAYED FOUR HOURS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THEN FURTHER POSTPONED TO ALLOW FOR PARTICIPATION OF COMORAN DELEGATION WHICH WAS SAID TO BE AT AIRPORT BUT IN FACT NEVER TURNED UP AT CONFERENCE. THIS SUGGESTS THAT SEYCHELLOIS CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN HODOUL PURPOSELY DELAYED PROCEEDINGS IN ORDER TO SPRING NEWS OF WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A "GRAVE THREAT TO THE STATE" WHILE CONFERENCE WAS STILL IN SESSION. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HODOUL ORGANIZED A RESOLUTION OF "REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY" FROM 15 RADICAL PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS ASSEMBLED. AT PRESENT EMBASSY HAS NO REASON TO ATTACH PARTICULAR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO ANALOGUE IN COMMUNIQUE TO BAY OF PIGS OPERATION.

6. GOS ACTION AGAINST LOCAL DISSIDENTS IS BOLDEST ACTION YET UNDERTAKEN AND IS LIKELY TO ERODE GOS OBJECTIVE OF RESTORING INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CONFIDENCE WHICH WAS BADLY BATTERED BY JUNE 5, 1977 COUP D'ETAT.
MATTSON

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